



B.J. Pendergast

**SPACE CONSTRAINTS** at Ghent Playhouse forced set designer Ken Young (right) to be creative in constructing set pieces to pull off elaborate productions like *Into the Woods*. Here he works with Holmes Hutchinson on the set of *Guys and Dolls*, which opens February 18 at the playhouse

## Sets

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for the 1993 season

"He is fabulous and I'm glad to say he will be back with us next season," commented the Theater Barn's Joan Phelps

The second member of the work crew is Chatham native Holmes (call me "Hutch") Hutchinson. Retired from Sterling Drug, Inc. nine years ago, he was "climbing walls after two months off the job" and accepted a position as purchasing manager at the Firemen's Home.

Now he is "really retired and just puttering around." Someone knew he was "available and could do some carpentry" and connected him with the Ghent Playhouse, he said.

"The stage work is like most of the things I've done. I didn't know much about it when I started and learned as I went along. Now it has become something I enjoy and it keeps me busy."

Lyle (Pete) Wagar was a natural to become the third member of the

trio. He is retired and lives next door to the playhouse.

After a 15-year career with the railroad and 21 years with Columbia Box, Mr. Wagar works for the Town of Ghent in maintenance of recreation fields and other areas.

He maintains the building and grounds at the playhouse and "only helps with the sets if I'm needed," he said modestly.

The three men have completed a job to help patrons who must take back-row seats at the playhouse. They built reinforced platforms, each six inches higher than the one in front, and raised the last four rows of seats.

"Now the seats at the back are the best in the house," said Mr. Young.

The 100 plush seats were donated from the old Hellman's Theater in Albany.

*Guys and Dolls* premieres Friday, February 18, and runs through three weekends: February 18 to 20, 25 to 27 and March 4 to 6. Performances Friday and Saturday are at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 for evenings and \$11 for matinees. Students and seniors receive \$1 off. For information, call 392-6264.

## Berkshire Botanical gig teaches gardening skills

**STOCKBRIDGE**—The Berkshire Botanical Garden offers a class, *Sow and Grow: Selecting and Starting Seeds* Saturday, February 5.

To help gardeners become more selective when ordering seeds from catalogues, Dan Tawczynski, owner of Taft Farms in Great Barrington, will present *How to Know 'Em* from 10 a.m. to noon.

*How to Sow 'Em*, a course on starting seeds indoors, is taught by Botanical Garden Education Coordinator Dina Samfield from 1 to 3 p.m. Topics include how and when to sow seed, and how to raise, harden off, and transplant seedlings. Participants will start some of their own seeds and transplant seedlings to take home.

Each session is \$12 for Garden members, \$15 for non-members. Classes meet at the Center House. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch and attend both sessions. A hot beverage will be provided.

For information or to register call (413) 298-3926.

A more exhaustive course, *An Introduction to Gardening*, meets Wednesdays and Saturdays from March 9 through April 16. The 18-session course covers a wide variety of horticultural topics for amateur

and professional gardeners.

This year's classes are *Botany Demystified*, *Plant Healthcare*, *Pruning Trees and Shrubs*, *Building Garden Planters*, *Organic Vegetable Gardening*, *Designing with Native Plants*, *Roses for the Berkshires*, *Environmental Gardening with The Independent's Laurence Sombke*, *Native Plants for Shady Places*, *Making Small Fruits Grow*, *Building Healthy Soils*, *Gardening in Containers*, *Ornamental Grasses for Your Perennial Garden*, *Orchid Splendor*, *Designing Your Perennial Border* and a behind-the-scenes field trip to Garden in the Woods, Framingham.

Gardening course participants may enroll in individual sessions or the entire 18-session course, with increased savings based upon the number of courses selected.

Non-members of the Garden who register for the entire course will automatically receive the member rate and a one-year individual membership to the Botanical Garden, which includes discounts on all Garden courses. All who complete the entire course receive a certificate.

Some classes are limited to 25 participants.

# Original Olana studio site found

**GREENPORT**—Archaeologists from the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation continue to search for new clues into the life of Hudson River artist Frederic Church in the wake of the recent discovery of the site of Church's original studio at Olana State Historic Site.

After digging at Olana for a total of 10 days this past September, archaeologists identified the foundation of the original studio building and several artifacts, including a discarded tube of white lead paint. They also found bottles from a Hudson pharmacist which could have originally contained medicine or paint pigments.

The artifacts are being studied, treated and analyzed and will be conserved at the Bureau of Historic Sites in Waterford. Eventually some may be exhibited at Olana.

Plans are also under way to erect a sign marking the site of the original studio at Olana and to incorporate the location into the tour of the historic site.

The studio was built in 1866. From then until 1888 all of Church's major

works were painted in both his original studio at Olana and in his studio in New York City.

A team of five archaeologists from the State Parks agency's Bureau of Historic Sites located the exact site of Church's studio this fall in one of many digs which have occurred at intervals since 1987.

"The discovery of the exact site of Church's studio is very important to the interpretation of Olana because visitors will now be able to stand on this spot and view the same Hudson Valley landscape that inspired this great Hudson River artist more than a century ago," said Dr. Charles Fisher, the leader of the archaeological team.

This view from Olana is considered so important to the preservation of the historic site that the Olana Viewshed is listed as one of the 75 priority conservation projects in the "Conserving Open Space in New York State" plan, signed last year by Governor Mario M. Cuomo.

Preservation groups have been fighting for years to protect the view as it continues to be threatened by

proposed development along the river. Scenic Hudson has purchased easements in the middle of the viewshed ensuring the land will be forever protected.

The view also is considered to be of national importance by the Department of the Interior which has designated Olana a National Historic Landmark.

The studio was located about midway up the Olana hill on the highest point of land that Church owned when it was built. He and his wife had moved into *Cosy Cottage*, their first home on the property, by May of 1861.

In the 1870s Church began suffering from recurring bouts of crippling rheumatism making it difficult for him to paint. He then began to devote his artistic talents to architecture and landscaping, focusing his energy on the elaboration of his *Persian style* villa which he had built after acquiring additional property at the top of the hill.

Between 1888 and 1891 he added a new studio wing to the villas and demolished the original studio.

## Learning continues after hours

**CHATHAM**—Middle School students still hungry for knowledge at the end of the day will soon have a new menu of after-school options.

The Middle School Parent Teacher Association seeks enthusiastic parents, community members, and students willing to share their talents in diverse, non-traditional courses.

The Student Council's "Kids Teaching Kids" program provides some student-teachers to the after-school effort, and a student survey suggests there are many students eager to move to the front of the room.

Classes meet once a week from 2:15 to 4 p.m. and last anywhere between three and six weeks.

The program is designed to create educational experiences in specialized or participatory kinds of learning for students in the middle school.

"One course is cartooning," says organizer Karen Malina. She also lists Old English, drafting, gymnastics, and drama as offerings.

Student-taught courses in the past have included computers, aerobics, and math.

"Some kids might like a place to do their homework with structure and support," muses Mrs. Malina.

Fees and salaries will be nominal, she forecasts, and some classes will require a materials fee.

"We're hoping really for exposure," says Mrs. Malina. "We're hoping that kids are curious and this will feed their curiosity, perhaps make a little more worldly kids who don't have the opportunity for enrichment." —Alec Appelbaum

## Extension teaches Iroquois planting

**VOORHEESVILLE**—Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County presents a program for youth educators in which Marcia Eames Sheavly investigates human culture and horticulture in the Iroquois Indian Society Monday, February 28 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The Three Sisters Project uses native crops—corn, beans and squash—to help students learn plant science, the history of these crops and their importance to the Iroquois culture. Foods and crafts prepared from these crops and how to grow the Three Sisters are included in the training.

Participants take home some freshly ground white corn flour.

The program is at the William Rice Jr. Extension Center on Martin Road. To register call 270-2781.

## Castleton library slates storyhour

**CASTLETON**—A Winter Storyhour takes place at the Castleton Public Library Saturday, February 5, from 10:15 until 11:30 a.m.

Leaders Darlene Miller and Cindylee Bohley share winter stories, songs, games and crafts with the children. All are invited.

The library is in the Village Hall at 85 South Main Street.

For information call 732-2211 during the regular hours of Monday and Wednesday 6 to 8 p.m.; Tuesday and Friday, 2 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to noon.

The library extends thanks to the following community members for their generous donations: to Castle-

ton firefighter Gibson Capparella and East Greenbush firefighter Russ Edburgh for the pamphlets in the October Fire Prevention Week display; to the Mesick or GEM Farm and Decker Farm for the Fall Harvest display; to Gould Orchards who supplied apples for the snack at the Autumn Happenings Storyhour.

Also, to Zelda Hotaling and Eva Ketter for sharing their Native American handicrafts; to the Castleton Four Paws who shared their award-winning Dog Training Course and to the local Boy Scout Troop #53 for donating an evergreen tree all set up by Scout leader Fred Wolfe.

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